

# Integrating Nutrition Services at an Interprofessional Student-Run Clinic



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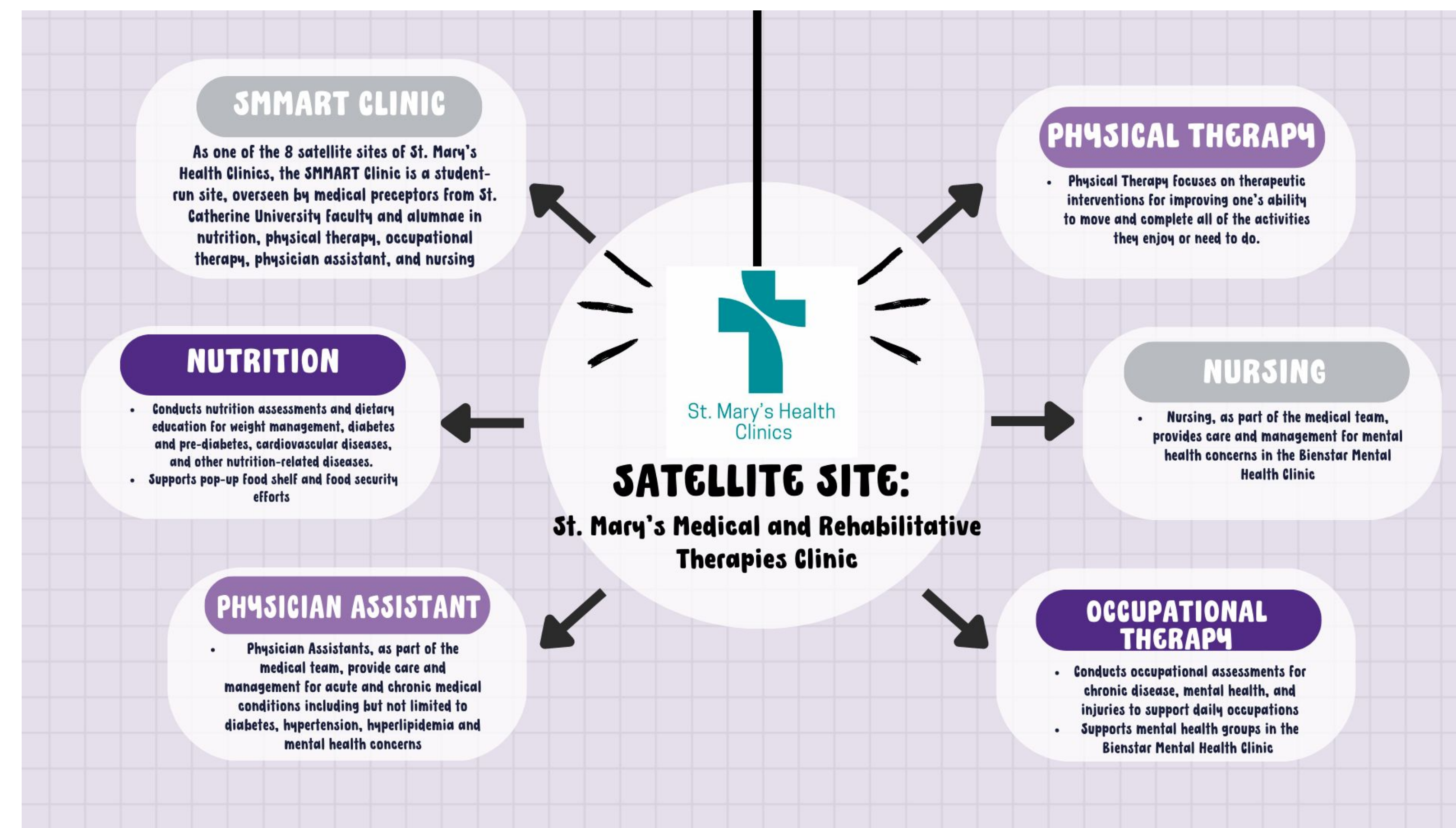
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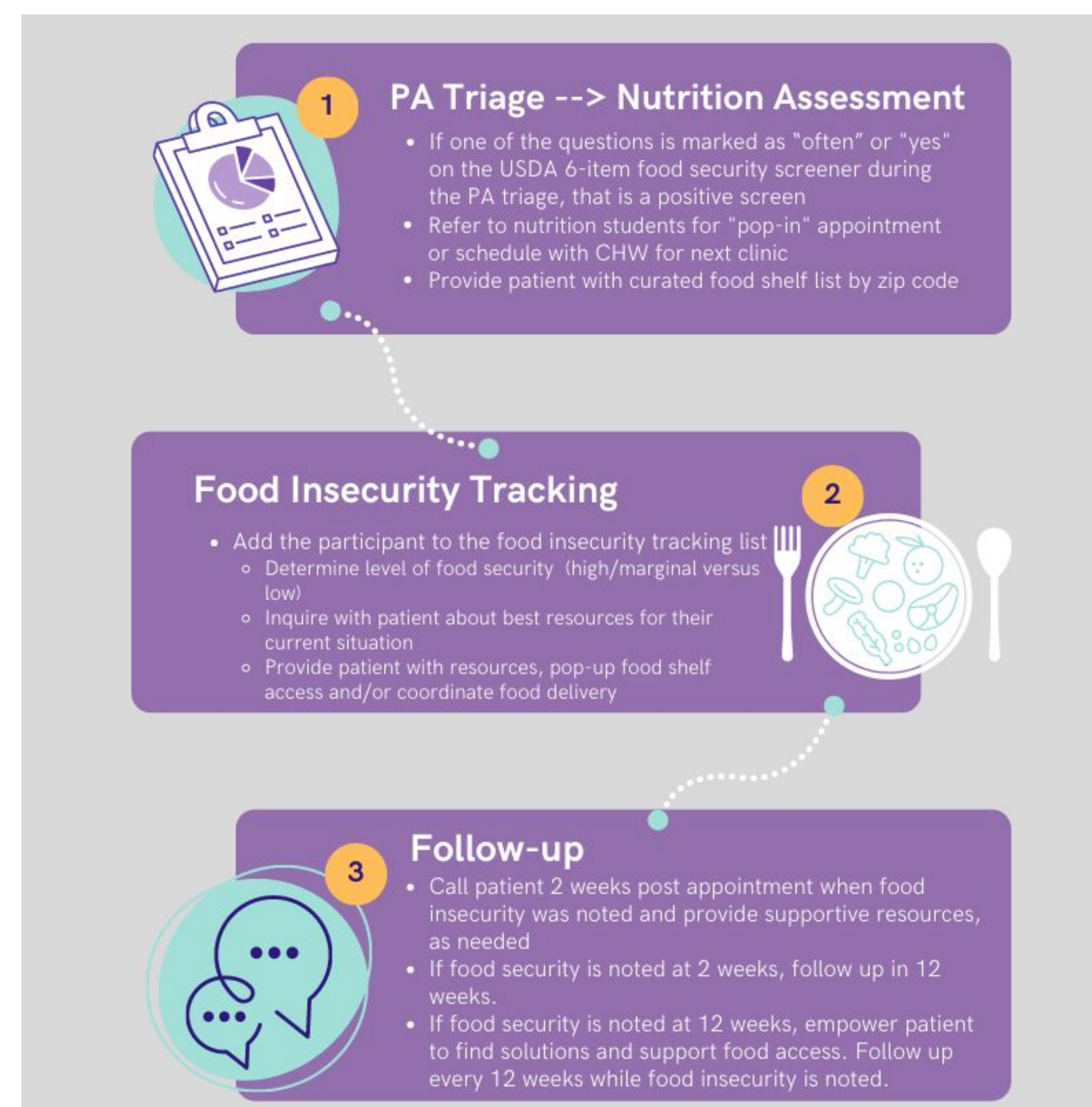
## INTRODUCTION

- The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics joined the interprofessional, student-run clinic at St. Catherine University, the St. Mary's Medical and Rehabilitative Therapies (SMMART) in 2020, to enable dietetics students and interns to provide culturally-appropriate medical nutrition therapy.
- This interprofessional clinic provides multiple facets of holistic care (Figure 1).
- The SMMART clinic serves individuals who have migrated to the Twin Cities area, largely identifying as Hispanic/Latinx.
- The patients of the SMMART clinic are at a disproportionately high risk for chronic nutrition-related diseases such as cardiovascular disease and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) due to high rates of obesity and other comorbidities.<sup>1</sup>
- Goal and purpose:** To implement a nutrition services program that provides nutrition assessment, food security resources, and nutrition education at an interprofessional student-run clinic.

**Figure 1.** Organizational structure and roles of each profession represented within the SMMART Clinic



**Figure 2.** Food Insecurity Protocol Established for patients screened as at risk for food insecurity



## METHODOLOGIES & METHODS

- To establish nutrition services within the SMMART clinic, 2 faculty members first initiated implementation of nutrition assessment and education.
  - Each patient is booked for a one-hour virtual or in-person nutrition appointment with access to an interpreter. Supplementary written nutrition resources were developed or identified in both English and Spanish to provide patients with tailored handouts or videos.
- An interactive process led to the development of a pop-up food shelf, food insecurity screening protocol, and video resources.
- Patients are referred from nursing staff, physician assistant students, and/or physical or occupational therapy students for medical nutrition therapy if they are identified to be at nutritional risk due to:
  - Food insecurity
  - Altered nutrition-related laboratory values
  - Obesity or weight management
  - or per patient request

## RESULTS

- From 2020-2022, 14 dietetics students and 1 dietetic intern have conducted over 225 appointments.
  - Nutrition assessments and education have been provided for 136 unique patients under nutrition faculty supervision.
  - The majority of patients are counseled on chronic disease management such as pre-diabetes or T2DM diet management, a heart healthy diet for blood pressure or cholesterol management, and weight management strategies.
  - Over 70 handouts and 7 videos have been developed to support patient knowledge.
- Development of a food insecurity protocol was implemented to support individuals experiencing challenges with food security (see Figure 2).
- A pop-up food shelf was developed and operationalized to provide staple food items, and fresh produce, when available.
- Multiple referrals have been made across the interprofessional team to ensure holistic patient care and referrals to St. Mary's Health Clinic emergency services.

## CONCLUSIONS & CURIOSITIES

- The integration of nutrition services in the SMMART clinic has been successful based on the quantity of care and is a unique opportunity for students, faculty and patients.
- We continue to explore ways to better serve patients via incorporation of food security/access into nutrition intervention (e.g. medically-tailored meal kits, garden access).
- Future studies to evaluate patient satisfaction, patient outcomes and interprofessional student learning outcomes would be helpful to move forward in advancing nutrition services at the clinic.

## REFERENCES

- Medina-Inojosa J, Jean N, Cortes-Bergoderi M, Lopez-Jimenez F. The hispanic paradox in cardiovascular disease and total mortality. Prog Cardiovasc Dis. 2014;57(3):286-292. doi:10.1016/j.pcad.2014.09.001